

31 July 2026

For Immediate Release

Competition Commission renews block exemption order for vessel sharing agreements in liner shipping industry

The Competition Commission (“Commission”) today announced its decision to renew the block exemption order for vessel sharing agreements (“VSAs”) between liner shipping companies¹ (“Order”) for a further five years. The Order will now remain in place, on the same substantive terms as originally set out in 2017, until 8 August 2031.

VSAs are agreements between shipping lines on certain operational arrangements, which include exchanging slots on each other’s vessels and coordinating sailing timetables. The Commission first issued the Order in August 2017 in light of the economic efficiencies generated by this category of liner shipping agreements. The Order declares that activities usually undertaken pursuant to VSAs are excluded from the application of the First Conduct Rule in the Competition Ordinance (“Ordinance”), subject to certain conditions.² The Order underwent a review (the first review) and was subsequently extended in 2022 for a period of four years. It is due to expire on 8 August 2026.³

The Commission conducted a second review of the Order over the past year, which included an initial public consultation as well as meetings with key industry stakeholders. After the review, the Commission published a proposal to renew the Order in June 2026⁴ and invited interested parties to submit representations pursuant to section 20 of the Ordinance.

The Commission has reached the conclusion that the relevant activities of the VSAs continue to meet the requirements of the efficiency exclusion. It also considers that the Order continues to be merited and effective. Accordingly, the Commission has decided to renew the Order for a duration of five years, until 8 August 2031. The Commission will commence a third review in four years’ time.

To give legal effect to the renewal, the Commission has varied the expiry date and the review period in the Order in accordance with the variation procedure set out in section 20 of the Ordinance. Documents relating to the renewal of the Order are published today and available in English and Chinese in the block exemption register on the Commission’s website at www.compcomm.hk.

¹ The Competition (Block Exemption for Vessel Sharing Agreements) Order 2017.

² See press release dated [8 August 2017](#).

³ See press release dated [7 July 2022](#).

⁴ See press release dated [11 June 2026](#).